The

THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Henry Beetle Hough, Edgartown, Mass., President; Robert Needham, Concord, Mass., Vice-President; and Walter Harding, State University, Geneseo, N. Y. 14454, Secretary-Treasurer. Annual membership, $2.00; life membership, $50.00. Address communications to the secretary.

BULLETIN ONE HUNDRED SIX WINTER, 1969

ELIZABETH HOAR OF CONCORD AND THOREAU
by Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller

Elizabeth Sherman Hoar (1814-1878) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) were life-long friends. They were Main Street neighbors in Concord, even next-door neighbors for one year, 1826-27, when the Thoreau family lived in #64 Main Street, then called "the Davis house" beside Squire Hoar and his family at #62 Main Street which was Elizabeth's home all her life. In 1827 the Thoreau family moved across the street, and later further down Main Street.

Elizabeth and her brothers, as well as Henry Thoreau, were students at the Old Concord Academy, founded in 1822 by Elizabeth's father, Samuel Hoar, and three other concerned citizens.

Elizabeth Hoar had been engaged to Emerson's beloved youngest brother, Charles Chauncy Emerson (1808-1836) who died shortly before the wedding. All her life, Elizabeth was a real "sister," mentor, and close friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and very close to all his family. Her friendship with the Peabody sisters of Salem was such that she persuaded the young Sophia Peabody and fiance' Nathaniel Hawthorne to live in Concord after their wedding in July 1842. In June, Elizabeth redecorated the Old Manse of Concord to receive them, while Henry Thoreau helped the Negro caretaker, James Garrison, put the gardens in order. Elizabeth became a close friend of Margaret Fuller (1810-50) through Emerson, and was an editorial assistant for them on the Dial. She tutored young Richard Fuller in Greek, and supported her friend Ellen (Fuller) Channing in her marital ups and downs with the poet William Ellery Channing while they lived in Concord and afterwards. When she traveled abroad, Elizabeth met the Carlyles in England and lived one winter in the Anglo-American colony in Rome. She visited Harriet Hosmer's studio there in the company of the Hawthornes, and was well acquainted with the Robert Brownings, the Wetmore Storys, and other famous men and women in that circle.

"This different drummer you march to—does he happen to own a distillery?"

Drawing by J. Mirachi; ©1968 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

In working on materials for an account of the interesting life of Elizabeth Hoar, I came across three letters dated 1828-29 in which the teen-age Elizabeth recounts Concord town gossip to her dear friend, Marianne C. Giles, young headmistress of the Female Seminary in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. In 1830 Marianne married Emory Washburn, lawyer and future governor of Massachusetts, among whose papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society these letters were found.(1)

The letters are long, and Elizabeth's intellectual, social and emotional interests are tumbled together in a completely unorganized fashion. But occasionally her keen perceptions come through in clear well-written sketches, as in her notes on the schoolmaster, or the full description of her new piano. These letters present some interest to Thoreau scholars because of notes pertaining to his family: Henry's gossipy mother, Mrs. John Thoreau, and his sister Helen who evidently practiced on Elizabeth's very fine piano.

Henry and Elizabeth both seem to have had a rather low opinion of the Preceptor of Concord Academy, Phineas Allen (1801-1885), Harvard 1825. Thoreau in later years (1847) wrote:(2)

> I was fitted, or rather made unfit for college, at Concord Academy and elsewhere, mainly by myself, with the countenance of Phineas Allen, Preceptor.

It is easy to see why Thoreau, the lover of nature,

disliked Phineas Allen when we read what Elizabeth wrote of him, October 1, 1828:

> Mr. Allen is married and takes school boarders. He has four boarders. His wife is rather pretty, not very genteel looking, nor very much otherwise. I have been introduced to her; have called. Mr. Allen seems as much like a man that has been married twenty years as father, almost.
>
> The school flourishes to his heart's content. In general thirty scholars. This term we have thirty-two. He has not altered a bit. I thought how Mr. Hildreth(3) would look as his successor, as much unlike in features as in mind. Mr. Allen, though unquestionably a very good man, puts me always in mind of an old maid. He is so afraid of getting wet, that he keeps two umbrellas, one at home, and one school, that he need never be caught in the rain. He went botanizing last summer, and though he saw a very rare plant, not a rod from him, he would not get it, as it grew on the bank of a pond; he said he was afraid of wetting his feet. I should think he had been bitten by a mad dog...
>
> We, Ann(4) and I, have studied very hard lately, Tacitus, Greek, and Algebra. I like and understand Algebra, though I don't take quite as much pleasure in hearing it explained as you probably did, as Mr. A/llen/ has not very handsome eyes, and what he has are covered by spectacles....
>
> Mr. Allen, in the plenitude of his goodness, takes scholars of all sizes. Our youngest is six years old...

But more interesting to Thoreau scholars are the notes in this letter on Mrs. Thoreau and Helen:

> ...The good people here move on as usual...Mrs. Thoreau herself can hardly find materials for slandering any body /sic/ but little girls like me, though she gets enough stories about us school girls to tell of. I am safe, however, for if she and I should quarrel, where could Helen practice?
>
> I wish you would come here and spend the winter, lady fair, to enliven us a little. Instead of company, and your conversation, I set at the worktable, and hem handkerchiefs and mend gloves, or else sit down to the piano all alone, unless I have Eddy or Rockwood /her brothers/ or perchance Mrs. Hoar /her mother/ once in a while, for an auditor...
>
> Such amusement is so very fascinating, etc., that I feel as dull as--as Concord, almost. I do, once in a while, have these pleasures varied, by hearing Helen's /Thoreau/ delightful music, or her Mama's equally delightful "Says I's." For all that I am not unhappy--only negatively happy. But this seems like positive unhappiness when compared to positive happiness, like what I enjoyed last summer...

A year later, November 2, 1829, Elizabeth writes:

> Helen Thoreau keeps school this summer and fall. Ann W/hiting/ stays at home to help her mother. Lucia keeps school and Sarah Hurd.
>
> What bonnet do you wear, for I want to know for a good many reasons. Mrs. Thoreau talks and scandalises /sic/ others as fast as ever. Mrs. Minot and Miss Dunbar are going to move to Boston.

The letters are full of more gossip and of "fashions and new and fashionable books," and she writes "I don't wear my hair straight, but curled all over my head a la mode, almost in my eyes." These letters give us the picture of a warm, outgoing, and thoroughly delightful adolescent with the promise of the lovely woman she was to become.

That there is no mention of Henry Thoreau himself in the letters is not surprising, for he was a quiet boy, so sober that Elizabeth's father, Squire Hoar, called him "the Judge." He was also three years younger, and in adolescence that is a great gap.

Even as a grown man, Thoreau did not particularly appeal. At one point in his Journals (Mar 23, 1843), Emerson records the following note:(5)

> Elizabeth says "I love Henry, but I do not like him." Young men, like Henry Thoreau, owe us a new world, and they have not acquitted the debt. For the most part, such die young, and so dodge the fulfilment. One of our girls said that Henry never went through the kitchen without coloring.

As Carl Bode explains in his psychological study of Thoreau:(6)

> He could see the reason for looking at pretty girls but not for trying to talk with them. He was not always cold to them, of course. However, from their point of view, the matter was summed up when Elizabeth Hoar remarked that, as for taking Henry's arm, she would as soon think of taking the arm of an elm tree.

However, because of their close association with the Emerson family and being frequently together in the house at various times, especially 1841 to 1843, Elizabeth got to know Thoreau much better. Therefore, when he left for New York to tutor Emerson's nephews, William and Haven Emerson, Elizabeth sent him a travel inkstand with a note (May 2, 1843) in which she said: (7)

> ...We have become better acquainted within the past two years than in our whole life as schoolmates and neighbors before; and I an unwilling to let you go away without telling you that I, among your other friends, shall miss you much, and follow you with remembrance and all best wishes and confidence. Will you take this little inkstand and try if it will carry ink safely from Concord to Staten Island ? and the pen, which, if you can write with steel, may be made sometimes the interpreter of friendly thoughts to those whom you leave beyond the reach of your voice, or record the inspirations of Nature, who, I doubt not, will be as faithful to you who trust in her in the sea-girt Staten Island as in the Concord woods and meadows...

Henry acknowledged the gift in his letter of May 22, 1843, to Lidian Emerson:(8)

> Tell Elizabeth Hoar that her bright present did "carry ink safely to Staten Island" and was a conspicuous object in Master Haven's inventory of my effects.

Two months later, July 8, 1843, he wrote the Emersons he was thinking of Concord and the various people there, including:(9)

> Elizabeth Hoar, my brave townswoman to be sung of poets--if I may speak of her whom I do not know.

He mentions the inkstand in a letter from Staten Island of October 17, 1843, to Emerson:(10)

> I write this in the corn-field--it being washing-day--with the inkstand Elizabeth Hoar gave me; though it is not redolent of corn-stalks I fear...

And in several of his letters he sends remembrances to Elizabeth Hoar among others.

There is a legend that Elizabeth Hoar was the veiled lady who paid Thoreau's tax when he was arrested for nonpayment. A letter from Alfred Hosmer to Judge Hoar in 1894 asked about this matter, and Judge Hoar replied:(11)

> I know nothing about it, I think I was not in town

when it happened. I have heard that the tax was paid by Thoreau's Aunt Maria. I do not believe it was paid by my sister.

Elizabeth Hoar, like her brother Edward, and like Emerson, admired the original qualities of Thoreau's mind and the depth of his character. They knew him to be one of the great men of Concord.

After Henry's death in 1862, someone making a pilgrimage to the cemetery with Elizabeth Hoar, protested Thoreau's simple gravestone and wished he had a "starry pointing monument." Elizabeth is quoted as having countered:(12) "This village is his monument, covered with suitable inscriptions by himself."

NOTES

(1) Permission to quote from this letter granted by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

(2) Quoted by Henry Seidel Canby, Thoreau, Boston, 1939, p. 40.

(3) Richard Hildreth, Harvard, 1826, was Preceptor of Concord Academy in 1826-27 when Marianne C. Giles had been there.

(4) Probably Ann Whiting, who was a Concord Academy student along with her brother William Whiting, Harvard, 1833, who later became Solicitor General in Lincoln's War Department. The Whitings lived almost directly opposite on Main Street, and were academic rivals of Elizabeth and Rockwood Hoar according to their youngest brother, Senator George Frisbie Hoar (1826-1904) in his Autobiography of Seventy Years, New York, 1903, 2 vols.

(5) Emerson's Journal R, p. 54 from the typed copy of it in the Concord Free Public Library.

(6) Carl Bode, "The Half-Hidden Thoreau," in the Mass. Review IV (1962), p. 69.

(7) Walter Harding and Carl Bode, The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau, New York, 1958, p. 98.

(8) Ibid., p. 104.

(9) Ibid., p. 124.

(10) The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, ed. by F. B. Sanborn, Vol. VI, Boston 1894 and 1906, p. 117.

(11) Hosmer File in the Concord Free Public Library; courtesy of Mrs. William Moss, Reference Librarian.

(12) William Ellery Channing, Henry Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist, Boston, 1902, p. 141.

LEO STOLLER (1921-1968)

With the death on November 29, 1968, of Dr. Leo Stoller, associate professor of English at Wayne State University, Thoreau scholarship and research lost one of its most devoted and sincere workers. Any man who knew Leo from the time he came to Detroit as an instructor in 1953 lost a good friend in a time when there aren't enough to go around.

Professor Stoller was born in Bessarabia in 1921, earned his BS (in biology) at CCNY, and his MA and Ph.D. from Columbia. He taught at the University of New Hampshire and Indiana before Wayne; and he was a Fulbright-Hays Lecturer at the University of New Delhi, India, in 1967. In connection with this Fulbright, I was reminded how fast things happen, especially unhappy ones, when I received on January 4, 1969, the American Studies Research Centre (Hyderabad, India) Newsletter, No. 11, December 1967, mentioning talks by Dr. Leo Stoller on Thoreau (and other American authors) at Simla, Agra, and Ajmer seminars on American literature during 1967.

His best know work was AFTER WALDEN: THOREAU's CHANGING VIEWS ON ECONOMIC MAN (Stanford University Press, 1957; reprinted 1966); he was also author of HENRY DAVID THOREAU, 1817-1862: BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS AND ASSOCIATION ITEMS IN DETROIT AND ANN ARBOR (Wayne State University Libraries, 1962), in addition to articles and reviews on Thoreau in ISIS, NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, SOUTH ATLANTIC QUARTERLY, MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW, AND BOOKS ABROAD. His piece on "Civil Disobedience" in the MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW is reprinted in John H. Hicks's THOREAU IN OUR SEASON (University of Massachusetts Press, 1966).

A member of the American Historical Association, American Studies Association (president of the Michigan Chapter, 1962-63), and Modern Language Association, he was chairman of Wayne's American Studies Program, 1965 to 1967, when I succeeded him on his leaving for India.

These facts show interests and achievements, but with countless others I liked Leo for his strong-minded independence in thought and action, his earnestness, and his humor which kept him from the excesses of his radical friends. Even when he was being his most stubborn (from your point of view) and in opposition to what you wanted to do or wanted him to do, you couldn't help but like the guy--he was so human. I can't think of a man I more enjoyed arguing with, no matter who won the argument.

At the time of his death Leo was one of the editors at work on the complete edition of Thoreau, sponsored by MLA's Center for Editions of American Authors; his specific job was on the work sheets of two HDT books, one on forestry, another on the cycle of the seasons, which included an unpublished complete essay, beginning with an account of huckleberries and ending with Thoreau's views on private property.

Readers and students of Thoreau will continue to remember Leo Stoller for these editorial labors, and be in his debt. In addition, I'll recall the personality, the friendship, the disputes, and all the little things that didn't get into the books, articles, and reviews--but, on the other hand, perhaps they did, just as for Thoreau, get into the writings.
--William White (Wayne State University).

THE 1969 ANNUAL MEETING . . .

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society will be held, as usual, in Concord, Mass., on Saturday, July 12, 1969. Details of the meeting will be announced in the Spring, 1969, bulletin.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE . . .

Henry Beetle Hough, president of the Thoreau Society, announces the appointment of the nominating committee for 1969: Mrs. Herbert Hosmer, Mr. Robert Wild, and Mr. Roland Robbins (chairman). Suggestions for nominees for officers or members of the executive committee should be sent to the chairman (RFD, Lincoln, Mass.). Nominations will be announced in the spring bulletin and election of officers will be conducted at the annual meeting.

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: T.Bailey,A.Brooks,M.Campbell,J.Donovan,R.Epler,D.Finley,M.Fenn,F.Flack, M. Flak,M.Goering,B.Gronewald,S.Hosmer,L.Kleinfeld, J.Morine,V.Munoz,K.Kasegawa,M.Parsons,B.Railsback, R.Robbins,G.Shedd,L.Simon,A.Seaburg,R.Schaedle,M. Sherwood,J.Vickers,A.Volkman,S.Wellman,R.Wheeler, P.Williams, and L.Willis. Please keep the secretary informed of new Thoreau items as they appear or old ones that he has missed.

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HENRY BEETLE HOUGH

Henry Beetle Hough, current president of the Thoreau Society, and editor of the Vineyard Gazette, Martha's Vineyard Island's only newspaper is without doubt, a kindred spirit of Thoreau and probably has been since childhood.

"Born to the purple" as far as newspaper work is concerned, he is the son of an editor whose name was known across the nation and, reared in its atmosphere, he inherited and has developed both interest and instinct in coping with the art and mystery of newspaper writing and management.

In 1918, at the age of twenty-two, he was the Pulitizer Prize winner for the best History of the Service Rendered to the Public by the American Press and he forsook tantilizing prospects of wealth and fame, when he and his wife, Elizabeth Bowie Hough took over the Vineyard Gazette as joint editors and publishers fifty years ago. This partnership continued until the death of Mrs. Hough three years ago, and in the meantime, the Gazette had weathered lean times and had grown in stature, prestige, and circulation under this joint management.

Here on the hundred square miles of sea-girt hills and plains, Henry Hough has studied the sample of Americana with a microscopic eye, and, as Thoreau did in his nature study, there has been very little of consequence which he failed to discover at hand.

His days have been long and arduous as an editor, and they continue to be long, and yet, looking backward to the roughest passage that he and his paper have experienced, he has always found opportunity to view nature and to describe with enthusiasm what he has seen and felt.

He has found time to write a shelfful of books, three of them featuring the Gazette, and while he could not avoid describing his own experiences, he has shared with a liberal hand, the credit for achievement with the Old Guard of the staff.

In this he has revealed a side to his nature which is unique, an aptitude for adopting for his own use a principle of nature which he has applied to his own personal problems.

There is nothing in the process of nature and natural forces which is associated with shock or brute force except those which deal with destruction. All that moves to produce beauty and bounty, is silent, gentle and constant in application. Applied to Henry Beetle Hough, he possesses a faculty for having things accomplished without ever even suggesting to anyone that here is a job that must be done. It would be difficult if not impossible to describe the operation of this faculty. Suffice it is to say that this writer has been a member of the Gazette staff for over forty years and yet has never received an order from Editor Hough.

Whatever the tumult within, his exterior is calm and unhurried. If it was not so he never could describe a Vineyard sunrise as he does in his editorials. He would miss the activities of the nest-building orioles in the apple tree and he would forget, under the press of duties, to give his collie the dog-biscuit for which he asks as plainly as he knows how.

The calendar and related records show that Henry Beetle Hough is seventy-two years old. His friends and associates know that he has grappled with every human problem. Yet his face is unlined, his step is springy and light, and he looks upon the world around him through the eyes of youth. He may indeed, have turned his back upon opportunity and all that it may signify, but he has enjoyed in its fullest flavor the wine of life and to imagine him in an environment differing greatly from that which he chose for himself half a century ago is to envision the stifling of a soul which would wither under any save self-imposed restrictions.--Joseph Chase Allen

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THOREAU by John Davies

[At the suggestion of Alan Seaburg we are beginning herewith a series of accounts of "First Encounters with Thoreau," showing the impact he has

had on some of our members. For the first article we have turned to Mr. John Davies of Broadstairs, Kent, England, who was a close friend and protégé of the great biographer of Thoreau, Henry S. Salt. --Ed./

In the first year of this century, at the age of sixteen, I was on the Liverpool Landing Stage awaiting the departure of the night boat to the Isle of Man where I purposed spending a fortnight's walking holiday alone.

Presently I was joined by a school friend of my own age come to see me off. In that shy, awkward manner peculiar to schoolboys conferring favours, he thrust into my hand a copy of the Walter Scott edition of Walden, saying, "Picked this up on a second-hand bookstall; thought you might like company on your lonely travels."

I walked the island from north to south and east to west, over "Snaefel" and through the lovely glens and read Walden seated on boulders by running streams, or in tea-shops. I remember little of the details of my island tour, but to this day retain vivid impressions of the impact of original thought on my immature receptive faculties.

I was John Farmer seated at his door on a September evening and Thoreau's was the voice whispering, "Why do you stay here living this mean moiling life when a glorious existence is possible for you?"

Walden was that "peak in Darien" from which I caught my first glimpse of that Pacific Ocean of experiencing; that further dimension of consciousness to which Thoreau repeatedly refers and with such assured realizations, "A part of me....that is no more I than it is you?"

"Life," "Living," is the burden throughout Thoreau's discourse, a sermon of universal interest, but particularly addressed to me. Simplify! he continuously preaches; to what end simplify? to the end that I might have "life" more abundantly.

A COMPUTERIZED PORTRAIT OF THOREAU

As a novelty, Larry Harding of Geneseo, New York, transposed a well known profile of Thoreau by Walton Ricketson onto a computer with the result shown here. The fact that Thoreau's profile is outlined with dollar signs was not done with malice aforethought but simply because the dollar sign is the darkest symbol on the computer tape.

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON THOREAU

With the permission of University Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Michigan, we are beginning herewith a series of reproductions of abstracts of dissertations on Thoreau. The full dissertations are available from University Microfilms at the prices given at the end of the articles.

SCIENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOREAU'S ART.

(Order No. 67-2869)

William Watson Nichols, Ph.D.
University of Missouri, Columbia, 1966

Supervisor: Dr. Leon T. Dickinson

Thoreau's deep interest in science has received considerable attention from students of his life and thought. Recent criticism, however, has emphasized his achievement as an imaginative writer, and this study attempts to evaluate the impact of his involvement in science on his development as a literary artist.

Influenced by Emerson's early belief that modern science would be important in uniting man and nature, Thoreau in the years after he graduated from Harvard was interested in science as a method of perceiving. As he recognized the inevitability of failures in perception in human relationships, he seems to have turned increasingly to the naturalist's world of flora and fauna, partly because he could see it clearly. By 1845, natural facts, the results of his increasingly detailed observations, were beginning to appear in his Journal and notebooks, as though such facts had significance in themselves; and after 1850 he collected facts diligently, both from his reading in science and from his own observation of natural phenomena, hoping all the while that he could eventually transmute them into poetic truth.

But Thoreau's Journal reflects a growing apprehension about the value of facts, a fear that he was drowning his imagination in trivia. His development can be looked at meaningfully as in part a conflict between an impulse toward detailed analysis and clarity of perception, which he associated with the scientist, and his Transcendental faith in an intuitive, synthesizing point-of-view, which he identified with the poet.

This conflict is reflected in A Week (1849), where the structural breaks between the narrative framework and the book's Transcendental essays indicate the difficulty which Thoreau experienced in using facts as he intended. Although he was able, in several short passages, to fuse the concrete and abstract levels in successful tropes or to move within individual paragraphs from fact to Transcendental doctrine, he did not unify the whole book. Significantly, the lack of unity is apparent on the abstract level in Thoreau's conflicting views of science expressed in A Week.

In the years after 1850, while Thoreau was reworking Walden (1854), his reading in science focused upon the problem of biological classification and his own studies aimed at predictability. Efforts to find a "natural" method of classifying plants were directed, as Thoreau knew, toward organizing botanical knowledge in a way that would justify broad conclusions and even predictions. In addition, Thoreau's studies of the relationship between organisms and environment and his attempts to predict seasonal phenomena are related to the whole matter of moving from isolated natural facts to larger truths. These scientific interests are apparent in the experimental framework of Walden. In revising his greatest book, Thoreau increasingly emphasized the systematic, objective quality of his experiment at Walden Pond. His Transcendental "Conclusion" thus seems to grow naturally from the careful observations, the detached candor, and the many facts which characterize the book. Experimental science offered Thoreau a way of fusing the actual and ideal with the force of a poet. Microfilm $3.00; Xerography $8.00. 174 pages.

THOREAU: TWO MODES OF DISCOURSE.

(Order No. 65-13,981)

Sidney Boris Poger, Ph.D.
Columbia University, 1965

Henry David Thoreau developed his modes of writing from two traditional New England sources: the excursion whose destination is heaven, as exemplified by Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress, and the sermon, especially as it had developed in the nineteenth century into its secular counterpart, the lecture. Both the excursion and the sermon can be most easily seen in Thoreau's essays on walking.

"A Walk to Wachusett" illustrates the three parts of the excursion: the preparation for the moment of illumination, the evanescent moment of illumination, and the return to the everyday world. "A Winter Walk" also follows the same form, although not so clearly since it is a blend of many walks rather than a fictionalized account of a single one. Both of these essays, in following the excursion form, show Thoreau's audience how he attained his moment of illumination and, indirectly through example rather than directly through precept, how the audience itself could live a better life: this mode of discourse is indirectly didactic.

Thoreau's excursions in book form follow the same pattern. A Yankee in Canada is the least successful, for Thoreau pondered over it the least. But Cape Cod, the product of more than one trip, is more successful; it shows Thoreau studying the ocean and how man lived with it. Although Cape Cod fails to achieve its moment of illumination through comprehension of the sea, it does discover how men lived with this natural object. In the same way, The Maine Woods fails to show a successful moment of illumination but does discover how men, both aboriginal Indians and white settlers, lived there. Only through the three separate essays which make up this volume does Thoreau achieve this object; the ultimate success of The Maine Woods lies, not in any single essay, but in the relationship of each of them to the questions raised by Mount Ktaadn.

"Walking" is a secular sermon, a directly didactic lecture aimed at the audience. It follows the technical parts of the sermon form, explaining directly to its readers what it is they should do with their lives. Thoreau's most famous essays, such as "Civil Disobedience," follow this pattern.

No full length books follow the directly didactic pattern: however A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers and Walden are the products of a fusion of the directly didactic form with the excursion or indirectly didactic form. A Week is an excursion interlarded with sermon materials but with the destination of the excursion omitted, a strangely truncated but thick book. Walden is the completely successful fusion of these two sources, for Walden tells of a journey taken through the year in which materials are not inserted as they were in A Week but arise naturally from the incidents of the life Thoreau is describing. The ultimate success of Walden can be seen through the comparison of the first version, an almost pure excursion, with the final version, a complex and excellent combination of Thoreau's two modes of discourse. "Economy" describes the lives of quiet desperation from which Thoreau is withdrawing; the rest of the book moves contrapuntally between the demands of each of Thoreau's modes. The excursion calls for a climax about two-thirds of the way through; the sermon calls for a climax at the end. Walden successfully uses both these places as climaxes of his life by the pond and does so successfully.

Microfilm $3.75; Xerography $13.30. 292 pages.

A CRITICAL STUDY OF
THE POETRY OF HENRY THOREAU

(Order No. 64-10,338)

Arthur Lewis Ford, Jr., Ph.D.
Bowling Green State University, 1964

Adviser: Richard C. Carpenter.

Although there has been a steady increase during this century in the reputation of Henry Thoreau and the amount of scholarship devoted to him, surprisingly little serious criticism has been directed to his poetry in spite of the fact that a collected edition was published in 1943 and again, in expanded form, in 1964.

This dissertation attempted to correct this situation by examining the various elements of Thoreau's poetry as well as relating it to his literary theory. In the course of the examination, it was discovered that a consistency exists within the body of Thoreau's poetry which is related to his other works and to Transcendental metaphysics generally.

Thoreau's literary theory rests on the Romantic assumption that knowledge, including poetry, comes to the individual intuitively. The poet, therefore, is simply the highly sensitive medium by which the poem is translated to the reader. Other statements made by Thoreau and the evidence of his own poetry, however, suggest that he worked quite consciously at creating the impression of inspirational poetry rather than following its dictates completely.

This concept of contradiction or duality is also found throughout all elements of Thoreau's poetry. Thematically, his poetry reveals the desire for freedom and action as they oppose and are limited by restrictions of various kinds, a desire found elsewhere in Thoreau's writings. His images also cluster around this central duality of freedom-restriction as revealed by a list of his most frequent image groups: sounds; smells; water or floating; clouds, mist, or smoke; wind; morning or dawn; the sun; the stars and other celestial bodies.

The duality inherent in Thoreau's intuitive concept of literary composition manifests itself in his technical concerns. His meter, line lengths, rhymes, and diction suggest that he consciously attempted to create the impression of intuitive composition. Further, his larger structural devices also reflect a duality. Most of the poems are based on the simple rhetorical device of contrast, usually contrast between an ideal concept or action and its physical counterpart which fails in some way. In addition, the poems also make extensive functional use of paradox and punning, again reflecting the dual nature of Thoreau's poetry.

This dissertation did not attempt to resurrect Thoreau as a major American poet; he is not. But it did insist that his poetry be taken more seriously than is currently the case, for its own value, for its relationship to Thoreau's prose, and for the place which it occupies in the history of American poetry. A final chapter suggested that Thoreau's experimentation as a poet looks forward to but falls far short of the poetry of Walt Whitman.

Microfilm $2.75; Xerography $5.80. 117 pages.

THE THOREAU FELLOWSHIP . . .

Mrs. Mary P. Sherwood has recently announced the founding of The Thoreau Fellowship, National ad International, "for intellectual and spiritual intercommunication between devotees of Henry David Thoreau throughout our Thoreau World, and to do honor and justice to Thoreau's name with sincere Thoreau works of which he would be proud, from our academic halls to our firesides and home libraries all around our 'great circle sailing.'" The Fellowship will publish a quarterly Thoreau Journal. Membership is $2.00 a year. Headquarters are at "Thoreau Carry," Penobscot River Road, Rt. 2, Milford, Maine (Mail address: P. O. Box 551, Old Town, Me. 04468). Mrs. Sherood was formerly curator of the Thoreau Lyceum.

THOREAU BORROWS A BOX OF PAPERS . . .

We are indebted to Mrs. Marcia Moss, reference library of the Concord Free Public Library, for calling to our attention the manuscript of a letter from Hannah Hunstable to Nathan Brooks which is in the collection of the library and to the library trustees for their permission to publish the following excerpts from that letter:

Holliston Ms Febry 24, 1853

Nathan Brooks, Esq.

Sir, I recd a letter last week requesting me to answer some questions which you name. But, I believe you forgot to name the person refered [sic] too [sic]. After reading your letter

again, I think you must mean my Father, and therefore will answer you accordingly.

My Father was the son of the Revd Ebenezer Parkman, the first Minister of Westborough. . . .

In concluding the affairs, att [sic] the late dwelling of my Father there was a box of papers carried to my sister Heywards [sic] that we could look over them at liesure [sic]. Mrs. S. Richardson let David H. Thoreau take the box and he took what he wishd and those that to us were valuable. If you could obtain them it would oblige me,

Your friend,
Hannah Hunstable.

From the looks of things, Thoreau's interest in antiquarian matters led him into a position where he had some explaining to do. Nathan Brooks, incidentally, was one of Concord's leading citizens and had been one of the trustees of the Concord Academy at the time Thoreau and his brother rented the academy building for their school.—WH

NOTES AND QUERIES . . . .

Dr. Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller, author of the lead article in this bulletin on Elizabeth Hoar and Thoreau, is at work on a biography of Elizabeth Hoar and would appreciate hearing from anyone who knows the whereabouts of any unpublished material on Miss Hoar. Dr. Miller's address is 5 Willow St., Concord, Mass.

Miss Annette Jackson of Columbus, Ohio, has shared with us the following several paragraphs from an examination paper by a student in a high school English class. The question was on Walden, but as Miss Jackson suggests, perhaps the student was "marching to a different drummer":

"Walden lived near Boston the literary center. In that area it was getting very populated. In the time Thoreau lived there it wasn't nearly so populated, so Thoreau could be alone much easier. In having this situation Walden know the actions of people and delt in why they made some of the actions. On the other hand Thoreau delt almost completely in the mind, with the action he made and why he made them. These two men are quite similar in this respect. Thoreau didn't want to work because he was not only wealthy enought but also he believed in doing what you want, when you want. He was forced into working to support his family when his father died. Walden on the other hand never worked very much at all. . . .

"Walden expresses his own feelings, rather than others, saying that he should not talke about himself if there were anyone else whom he knew as well. Walden traveled a great deal in Concord, and loved nature. Nature was a friend, a beautiful sight which could be observed for hours. Thoreau was definately a romantic person. As Walden explains how he went traveling and observed nature, he resembles Thoreau a great deal. When reading Walden's work, one often thinks of Thoreau. One small item of nature often is amazing to Walden. Take for ixample, a stream. Notice the sandy bottom and the shallow water. The thin currents ripple o'er the top caused by wind. How could anyone find nature boring?"

Members are reminded that the 1969 photography contest is to be devoted to photographs of the cairn at Walden Pond over the years. Emphasis will be placed on the earliest pictures of the cairn and on photographs of famous people visiting the cairn. The photographs should be sent to Robert Needham, Walden Terrace, Concord, Mass., well in advance of the annual meeting in July. They will be judged by members attending the annual meeting and the winners will be announced at the Saturday evening session. Photographs submitted in the contest will be deposited permanently in the Thoreau Society Archives in the Concord Free Public Library. All photographs submitted should be accompanied by as many details as possible as to who took the photograph and when it was taken.

The question was asked in a recent bulletin as to when the Rowse crayon portrait of Thoreau first appeared in print. Malcolm Ferguson of Concord replied, "I think the first use of the Rowse portrait was in the early edition of Excursions--as the 1866 Ticknor & Fields, with their name on the spine (as opposed to the same edition with Fields, Osgood on the spine).

In the fall bulletin Ralph Chapman inquired about the present whereabouts of a poet by the name of Thoreau Elizabeth Raymond who won several prizes for poetry in St. Nicholas magazine about 1930. We received replies from Joseph Farkas, Miss Julia Damkoehler, and Mrs. E. Neal Railsback, pointing out that Miss Raymond teaches history in the high school in Bennington, Vt., and that her father was a great admirer of Thoreau. Mr. Farkas added that at one time his son Walden Farkas was a student of Miss Raymond--which is somewhat of a coincidence of names.

Henry B. Kane of Lincoln, Mass., adds to Mrs. Kamen-Kaye's comments in our fall bulletin on Thoreau's plum cakes, "Webster says under Plum, 'Any of several unrelated trees having an edible plum-like fruit: also, the fruit itself.' That 'trees' should have been 'trees, vines, shrubs and bushes,' for it includes fruits from all of these." He also includes a recipe for plum cake from a cookbook contemporary with Thoreau--A SHILLING COOKERY FOR THE PEOPLE by Alexis Soyer, published in London in 1854: "PLUM CAKE.—Weigh one pound and a half of flour, one of currants, well washed, one of butter, one of sugar, nine eggs; put into a good-sized basin the butter, which well work, with clean hands, until it is like a cream; in about ten minutes it is ready; then add a little sugar and the eggs by degrees, and then the flour, then add the currants and line a cake-hoop with paper, put the mixture in, set it in a warm place for one hour, and bake it for one hour in a slow oven. Half or even a quarter of the quantity may be made." And, Mr. Kane adds, "Don't forget those clean hands."

The original Makham daguerreotype of Thoreau that was donated to the Thoreau Society Archives by Mr. Theo Brown of Moline, Ill., grandson of Thoreau's friend of the same name, has recently been on display at the opening exhibit of the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., and is reproduced in the catalog of that exhibit, This New Man: A Discourse in Portraits, available from the gallery for $7.30.

Joseph O'Brien (185 Park Row, New York, N.Y.) recently held an exhibition of "Paint-Poems"--abstract water colors based on quotations from Thoreau at the Kaymar Gallery, 548 LaGuardia Place in New York City.

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"The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."—Walden, "Economy."